

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 22 with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- Referring now to Fig. 2, layer 20, cover 22, and ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 of member 19 are each made of a medical grade silicone or other type of pliable elastomer. Two companies, for example, which manufacture such medical grade silicone are GE Silicones and NuSil Technology. It is within the scope of this disclosure, however, to include a member made of any type of thin, flexible material that is non-porous and non-foam-like. This thin, flexible material is also generally non-absorptive. For example, materials such as polyvinylchloride (PVC), PVC free of diethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP-free PVC), polyurethane, or polyethylene may be used in the manufacture of member 19. Further, layer 20, cover 22, and ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 may each be molded to include anti-microbial constituents. For example, it is within the scope of this disclosure to impregnate member 19 with silver ions which are known anti-microbials. --

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 1 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Member 19, including layer 20, cover 22, and ~~connector 23~~ connector 23, is also made of a generally non-adhesive material. Therefore, wound contacting layer 20, which lies adjacent to the wound surface 13, does not adhere to the wound surface 13. Further, member 19 is solid in nature and generally non-compressible. Member 19 is also transparent, as shown in Fig. 3. Therefore, a caregiver or user is able to see the wound 12 through member 19 when member 19 is placed adjacent to wound surface 13. This transparency allows the caregiver to view the progress of the healing of the wound 12.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 23 with the following rewritten paragraph:

A plurality of radially extending protrusions or bosses 32 are positioned around central area 28. Bosses 32 are positioned between central area 28 and channels 30, 31, as shown in Fig. 1. Bosses 32 are provided to prevent central area 28 from collapsing in on port 40 of cover 22 to form a seal and effectively block air flow through port 40 while suction is applied to the bandage 10. Port 40 communicates with the vacuum source 14 and/or the irrigation source 16 via ~~connector~~

~~23 connector 23~~ and tube 41, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. As shown in Fig. 5, tube 41 is coupled directly to ~~connector-23~~ connector 23. In some embodiments, tube 41 may be coupled to ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 by a barbed tube coupler (not shown) engaged with tube 41 and connector 23 to provide a fluid connection therebetween.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 6 with the following rewritten paragraph:

~~Connector-23~~ Connector 23, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 is a tubal port coupled to a top surface 36 of cover 22 and in communication with port 40 of cover 22. As mentioned before, it is within the scope of this disclosure for connector 23 to be a separate component of member 19 which is coupled to cover 22 or for ~~connector-23~~ connector 23 to be coupled to cover 22 by being molded integrally with cover 22. Connector 23 includes a passageway formed at a right-angle. Thus, the passageway in ~~connector-23~~ connector 23 has a vertical portion 25 that communicates with port 40 and a horizontal portion 27 that communicates with vertical portion 25. Connector 23 may also be molded to include a single passageway positioned at an angle with respect to cover 22. Connector 23 connects with tube 41 to provide a horizontal tube attachment for tube 41. Cover 22 includes a bottom surface 34 and top surface 36, as shown in Fig. 1. Bottom surface 34 engages opposite surface 26 of layer 20, as shown in Fig. 2.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 18 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In some embodiments, member 19 is formed by heat sealing opposite surface 26 of layer 20 and bottom surface 34 of cover 22 together and by heat sealing ~~connector-23~~ connector 23 to top surface 36 of cover 22. For example, each of ~~connector-23~~ connector 23, cover 22 (or the combination of cover 22 and ~~connector-23~~ connector 23), and layer 20 may be pre-shaped and formed from semi-cured silicone. Once the ~~connector-23~~ connector 23, cover 22, and layer 20 are placed together appropriately, the entire member 19 may be heated to heat seal and cure each of the three components to one another. Alternatively, for example, the cover 22 only may be made from semi-cured silicone while the ~~connector-23~~ connector 23 and layer 20 may be made from fully cured silicone. Once placed together and heated, ~~connector-23~~ connector 23 and layer 20 will heat seal to cover 22. Semi-cured silicone may be bought and pre-molded from a manufacturer such as NuSil Technology, for example.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 30 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Although the method of heat sealing the cover 22, ~~connector~~ connector 23, and layer 20 to each other is disclosed, it is within the scope of this disclosure to form member 19 by coupling layer 20, cover 22, and connector 23 together by any other suitable means such as through the use of adhesives, for example. Further, it is within the scope of this disclosure to provide a member 19 where cover 22 lies adjacent to, but is not coupled to, layer 20.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 3 with the following rewritten paragraph:

As mentioned above, cover 22 is coupled to layer 20 and ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 is coupled to cover 22 to form member 19. Cover 22 and layer 20 cooperate to form discrete passageways 42 of member 19 defined by channels 30, 31 of layer 20 and bottom surface 34 of cover 22, as shown in Fig. 5. Passageways 42 extend from an outer edge 66 of cover 22 and are in communication with central area 28 of layer 20. Illustratively, cover 22 has a first surface area and layer 20 has a second surface area larger than the first surface area. Therefore, outer portions of radial channels 30 extend between outer edge 66 of cover 22 and outer edge 68 of layer 20 to define peripheral access channels 62 for providing vacuum suction or irrigation to undermined portions 15 of wound 12. Central area 28 of layer 20 is in communication with port 40 of cover 22 which is in communication with the vacuum and/or irrigation sources 14, 16, via ~~connector 23~~ connector 23, and tube 41. Therefore, peripheral access channels 62 are in communication with the vacuum and/or irrigation sources 14, 16 via passageways 42.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 21 with the following rewritten paragraph:

Member 19, including layer 20, cover 22, and ~~connector 23~~ connector 23, includes a top surface and a bottom surface. The bottom surface of member 19 is wound contacting surface 24 of layer 20. The top surface of member 19, however, includes top surface 36 of cover 22 and the portion of upper or opposite surface 26 of layer 20 positioned between outer edge 66 of cover 22 and outer edge 68 of layer 20. Therefore, the access openings (including access channels 62 of layer 20 and access holes 64 of cover 22) are formed in the top surface of member 19.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 3 with the following rewritten paragraph:

As mentioned above, port 40 of cover 22 communicates with vacuum source 14 and/or irrigation source 16 via ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 and tube 41. As shown in Fig. 1, a switch valve 55 is provided which allows the caretaker to switch between the use of the vacuum source 14 and the irrigation source 16. It will be appreciated that a mechanism other than the switch valve 55

maybe used selectively to couple the vacuum source 14 or the irrigation source 16 to the bandage 10. Simple tube clamps, for example, may be used selectively to open and close the tube set provided with bandage 10. When valve 55 is switched to operate the vacuum source 14, the vacuum suction draws exudate up through holes 46 and openings 62, 64, radially inwardly through passageways 42 toward port 40, and finally through ~~connector 23~~ connector 23 and tube 41. Although tube 41 has been referred to as vacuum tube 41, tube 41 may also be used as an irrigation tube carrying liquid to the wound 12 from irrigation source 16, as described above.